

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Rael Acquisition**

DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2011-0002-EA

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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La Cienega Area Critical Environmental Concerns

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Taos Field Office received 2010 Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) from the Washington Office for acquisition of private land within La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Santa Fe County, New Mexico. BLM proposes to purchase 30.14 acres of non-federal lands and 12.9 acres of water rights from the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), which will acquire the property from the Estate of Lionedes Rael, and the Estate of Alonzo Rael. Acquisition of these interests would serve to consolidate BLM ownership of real property in the area, provide access to the Santa Fe River and enhance management opportunities of La Cienega ACEC. La Cienega ACEC contains nationally significant cultural resources as well as riparian, wildlife and scenic values. The BLM has actively been acquiring private land from willing sellers along the eastern boundary of the ACEC. These acquisitions lead the BLM to recover and protect over hundreds of petroglyphs, many archeological sites and natural resources. These private parcels also provide access to public land and to resolve trespass across private lands by visitors trying to reach public land.

While this environmental assessment (EA) evaluates the acquisition of the property by the BLM, disclosing the potential environmental effects of this action, a subsequent plan and EA would be prepared to consider the site specific management of the property by the BLM. This subsequent plan would address the specific management of the property, including the types and extent of certain uses of the property, maintenance and enhancement of facilities, recreational and interpretive opportunities, and other site-specific management prescriptions. Public participation—perhaps especially by neighboring property owners—will be imperative to this subsequent planning process and strongly encouraged by the BLM.

1.2 Location

New Mexico Principal Meridian,
Township 16 North, Range 8 East,
Section 30, Small Holding Claim 1250 Tract 1 (1.5 acres),
Small Holding Claim 2390 Tract 2,
Small Holding Claim 1250 Tract 3,
Small Holding Claim 1250 Tract 4 (14.17 acres).

1.3 Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of the action is to acquire non-federal land from a willing seller to ensure protection of important cultural and natural resources from the threat of degradation from potential future development of residential and/or commercial uses and to improve public access to the Santa Fe River canyon.

The need for the action is to protect and manage significant cultural resources, wildlife, and riparian habitat, and scenic values along the Santa Fe River as part of La Cienega ACEC as prescribed in the Taos Resource Management Plan.

1.4 Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with both the current Taos Resource Management Plan (BLM 1988) and La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern Coordinated Resource Management Plan (BLM 1995). These plans consider protection and enhancing the cultural, riparian, wildlife and scenic values as the priority management goals and include the following prescriptions and objectives:

- From willing sellers, acquire private lands on which significant cultural resources are located. Private lands acquired within the boundaries of the ACEC will become part of the ACEC and subject to all management prescriptions.
- Acquire private parcels of land from willing sellers to provide public access where warranted.

1.5 Identification of Issues

The Taos Field Office staff has provided input via internal scoping of the proposed project. Issues that have been identified include the following.

1.5.1 Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

- The effects that the acquisition would have on management of La Cienega ACEC

1.5.2 Cultural Resources

- Potential to effect important cultural resources within the property proposed for acquisition

1.5.3 Wildlife

- Potential to effect wildlife and riparian habitat along the Santa Fe River
- Potential to effect the migratory bird corridor along the Santa Fe River

1.5.4 Water Use

- Potential to alter water use in the Santa Fe River drainage

1.5.5 Recreation Resources

- The effects that the acquisition would have on public access to the Santa Fe River within La Cienega ACEC

Chapter 2: Description of Alternatives

2.1 Alternative A: Proposed Action

The Taos Field Office (Field Office) proposes to purchase 30.14 acres of real property and 12.9 water righted acres within La Cienega ACEC from the Trust for Public Land, which would be acquired from the Estate of Lionedes Rael, Deceased, and the Estate of Alonzo Rael, Deceased (see section 1.2 for the location description). The acquisition would protect and manage important cultural, wildlife, riparian, and scenic resources; consolidate BLM ownership; and provide public access to the Santa Fe River. By acquiring this property, the BLM would be able to ensure protection of petroglyphs, archeological sites, and natural resources from degradation of potential future development such as subdivisions. The acquired property would become part of the ACEC and be subject to all management prescriptions.

2.2 Alternative B: No Action

The BLM would withdraw their pursuit of purchasing the Rael property. The Rael family would continue to graze their livestock and irrigate the property to maintain their water rights. The property would potentially be placed on the market for sale. An unknown buyer may purchase the property and develop it. The existing resources would have very limited protection from surface disturbance activities imposed by the future landowner. However, the public would be unable to access this portion of the Santa Fe River.

Chapter 3: Affected Environment

The topics presented in the following sections may have impacts, whether negative or beneficial, on the human environment by the Proposed Action or alternatives and, therefore, are the subject of this environmental analysis. The following elements are not affected by the Proposed Action or alternatives for the reasons stated and would not be discussed further in this document:

Prime /Unique Farmlands – There are no prime/unique farmlands within the Project area.

Mineral – No mineral resource were identified on the property and a search of the BLM mining claims index did not disclose any mining claims in the area.

Traditional Agriculture – No detrimental impacts to water quantity, water quality, or private farmlands is anticipated within the Project area.

Hazardous/Solid Waste – A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was completed September 6, 2011 and no evidence hazardous or petroleum products; no toxic substances, fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, or fungicides; and no suspected asbestos-containing building materials or lead-based paints associated with the site.

Livestock Grazing – The Project area is within the Cienegan Community Grazing Allotment which is currently vacant. Currently, cattle grazing are not permitted within the Santa Fe River riparian area.

Wilderness – The Project is not within or near any designated wilderness areas or wilderness study areas.

Environmental Justice – The Project would have no effect on low-income or minority persons in the area.

Threatened and Endangered Species - It is determined that there are no federally listed threatened or endangered animal or plant in or adjacent to the project area. Although migrant Southwestern willow flycatchers have been detected in 2011 surveys conducted by the Bureau of Reclamation in the La Cieneguilla area adjacent to the acquisition property, no birds have established territories. There is no designated critical habitat for any species listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within or adjacent to the area.

3.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The Project area is located within the La Cienega ACEC, which contains nationally significant cultural resources as well as riparian, wildlife and scenic values (BLM 1995). La Cienega ACEC was designated in December 1992, when the BLM State Director approved La Cienega ACEC amendment to the Taos Resource Management Plan. La Cienega ACEC Coordinated Resource Management Plan (BLM 1995) emphasized the following:

- From willing sellers, acquire private land on which significant cultural and natural resources are located. Private land acquired within the boundaries of the ACEC will become part of the ACEC and will be subject to all management prescriptions. Private lands acquired adjacent to the boundaries of the ACEC will be managed as a buffer to the ACEC in support of the management prescriptions outlined in the plan.

- Acquire private parcels of land from willing sellers to provide public access where warranted.

3.2 Cultural Resources

Although this property has not yet been formally inventoried for cultural resources, various archeological sites have been recorded within La Cienega ACEC boundaries through the years to clarify the archaeological importance of the area. Most of the known prehistoric sites date to the Pueblo Period from about A.D. 700 to the beginning of the Historic Period. These sites include three periods spanning almost 900 years.

The first is a pithouse village that dates to A.D. 700-900. The second, located on La Cienega Mesa, contains a habitation dating to about A.D. 1100-1300. The Pueblo of Cieneguilla is a major pueblo habitation dating to the Classic Period (A.D. 1325-1600). All three of these sites may have been inhabited by the same people who simply moved to new locations along the Santa Fe River, or they may be unrelated. However, when Don Juan de Onate entered the area in 1598, Keresan people were living in a large pueblo that he referred to as “Cienega de Carabajal” (BLM 2007).

Great quantities of rock art are found near these three sites, which could provide comparisons of rock art development over nearly 1,000 years. Most of the other archaeological sites located within the ACEC are associated with these three sites.

El Camino Rael, the Royal Road of the Kings, was built through the Santa Fe River canyon to link the Pueblo of Santo Domingo on the Rio Grande to the Santa Fe area. The Camino Rael, which connected Mexico City to the northern frontier, was the most important trade route to Santa Fe until the opening of the Santa Fe Trail from Kansas City in 1822. The route of the Camino Rael probably served as a major prehistoric trail system connecting pueblos and those in the Santa Fe area. La Cienega pueblos may have been important in the turquoise trade because the mineral was mined prehistorically at Turquoise Hill (3½ miles southeast of La Cienega) and other numerous mines in the Cerrillos Hills (BLM 2007).

3.3 Wildlife

Habitat types in the area are dispersed vertically and horizontally over the landscape in a patchwork pattern that provides a large amount of “edge” where one habitat type blends into another. The riparian habitat along the Santa Fe River provides food, cover, and water to a diverse assemblage of wildlife species. Numerous unique, special-feature habitats exist within the area. Several species are “obligated” to these specific features, such as caves or cracks in cliffs or cavities in trees; that is, they cannot survive except where the feature exists. It is possible, because of the stands of salt cedar and Russian olive in the Project area, decreased plant diversity may be negatively affecting local wildlife populations (EA 2010).

The habitat provided in the Project area is likely utilized by many species of mammals, including black bear (*Ursus americanus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), chipmunks (*Tamias* spp.), cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), rock squirrel (*Spermophilus variegatus*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), wood rat (*Neotoma* spp.), and various species of bats (Order Chiroptera). In fisheries surveys conducted by the BLM (2009) fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*), Rio Grande sucker (*Catostomus plebius*), and mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*) were observed.

3.3.1 Migratory Birds

The proposed acquisition is within and adjacent to the Santa Fe River Canyon which is positioned along a major migratory corridor for avian species and provides important stopover, breeding, or permanent habitat for a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and migratory songbirds. The Santa Fe River Canyon is also part of the 39,807-acre Caja del Rio Important Bird Area (IBA; National Audubon Society 2010).

IBA's are designated sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird, include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds, and are usually discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape (EA 2010).

Sixteen riparian obligate or dependent bird species, as defined by the BLM (no date), have been observed in near the Project area during breeding bird surveys between 2000 and 2007 (Hawks Aloft 2007a), including the following: Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*), Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*), Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*), Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*), Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*), Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*), Bullock's Oriole, and Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*).

Other migratory birds (although some may overwinter locally) observed during breeding bird surveys between 2000 and 2007 upstream from the project area (Hawks Aloft 2007a) include the following: Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*), Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*), Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), White-throated swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*), Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*), Ladder-backed woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*), Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*), Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*), Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*), Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*), Piñon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*), Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*), Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*), Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*), Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*), American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*), Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*), Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), Canyon Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*), Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*), Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), and Brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*).

3.4 Water Use

The Rael property contains 12.9 acres of transferable water rights (State Engineer File Number 1283). The seniority date of these water rights is 1718 and the New Mexico District Court awarded the rights to the landowner on May 23, 1979 in the Santa Fe Stream System Adjudication. The water rights are listed as a diversion usage. That usage is 3.0 acre-feet per irrigated acre per year. The consumptive use amount, in this portion of the Santa Fe Watershed, is 50 percent of the diversion amount. Therefore, with a diversion amount of 39.6 acres-feet per year, the consumptive use amount is 19.8 acre-feet per year. The Office of the State Engineer normally will recognize only the consumptive use amount for transfer in any use other than irrigation; the sale would be on consumptive use amount. The 39.6 acres-feet of diversion water rights are valid based on 13.2 irrigated acres which translates to 19.8 acres-feet of consumptive use (Water Rights Analysis, 2007).

The point of diversion is located on separate privately-owned land about 1.2 miles upstream from the project area in Lot 4 of section 30 in Township 16 North and Range 8 East in La Cieneguilla area. In September 2011, several resource specialists from the Taos Field Office inspected the current conduction of the diversion and irrigation ditch. At the time, the river had generally sufficient flow to warrant the

effort to divert it. The ditch maneuvered ample flow into a holding pond located on the Rael property. Evidence found showed the ditch received routine maintenance.

The Santa Fe River appeared to contain a suitable amount of flow to divert to the irrigation ditch. The River is a tributary to the Rio Grande, with its watershed defined as Hydrologic Unit Area #1302020103. The Santa Fe River is currently one of only two perennial reaches found throughout the Santa Fe River watershed; however, the perennial nature of this segment is directly related to the Santa Fe Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges into the Santa Fe River, except during times of snowmelt and storm runoff. Accelerated runoff due to urban and suburban development (e.g., roads, asphalt, buildings) in and around the City of Santa Fe are commonly experienced. In addition to the Santa Fe Wastewater Treatment Plant effluent, springs in the Santa Fe Canyon are believed to provide approximately 3 cubic feet/second (cfs) to the river. In the summer months, the river experiences low flow which can be caused by evapotranspiration, evaporation, and agricultural diversion, while the peaks can be attributed to storm events (BLM 007). The Santa Fe River below the Santa Fe Wastewater Treatment Plant is an effluent-dominated system, thus the water quality within the Project area is directly influenced by the discharges of the Santa Fe Wastewater Treatment Plant. Water quality issues within the segment have prompted the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to list this segment of the Santa Fe River (Cochiti Pueblo Boundary upstream to the Santa Fe Wastewater Treatment Plant; Water Quality Segment 20.6.4.113) as impaired and not fully supporting marginal cold water aquatic life (NMED 2008).

3.5 Riparian Vegetation

The Project area consists of a relatively narrow floodplain and terrace complex, with strip riparian vegetation to a somewhat restricted floodplain. The area currently supports closed-canopy Russian olive patches with little or no understory vegetation and open and frequently flooded areas dominated by non-native herbaceous species such as creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), as well as native herbaceous species such as knotgrass (*Paspalum distichum*) and alkali muhly (*Mulenbergia asperifolia*), which are present to a lesser extent. The infrequently flooded terraces are dominated by the shrubs rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), one-seed juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnaceae*), a number of cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*), and Siberian Elms (*Ulmus pumila*), with little herbaceous vegetation observed. Scattered individuals of Goodding's willow (*salix gooddingii*) and coyote willow (*Salix exigus*) exist in this area.

3.6 Recreation

The Santa Fe River Canyon provides access for a variety of activities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, sightseeing, and cultural resource exploration. As well as the private landholdings within the canyon, the river corridor is entirely undeveloped and provides an area for local citizens and tourists to experience outdoor recreation on public lands. While the area is within 8 miles of Santa Fe, its recreational use is somewhat limited, probably because of the limited points to access the canyon and river corridor from public lands.

Chapter 4: Environmental Effects

4.1 Direct and Indirect Effects

This chapter describes the anticipated effects on the resource issues if the alternatives are implemented. The general effects of each alternative on resource categories are addressed. Direct effects are caused by an action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect effects are caused by an action and occur later in time or farther removed in distance.

4.1.1 Alternative A: Proposed Action

4.1.1.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The Proposed Action is consistent with the management objectives of the La Cienega ACEC Coordinated Resource Management Plan, which includes acquisition of private land from willing sellers where important cultural and natural resources are located and the acquisition of private parcels to provide public access where warranted (BLM 1995). The proposed action would increase federally owned acres within the ACEC boundary and consolidate landownership. The existing cultural and natural resources located within the subject property would be managed in accordance with Las Cienega ACEC Coordinated Resource Management Plan. These resources would be protected from future degradation from potential development.

4.1.1.2 Cultural Resources

The cultural resources contained within the subject property would be protected and managed in accordance with La Cienega ACEC Coordinated Management Plan. These resources would be inventoried and preserved for the enjoyment of future generations. Exploring and recording of these resources would provide a vital opportunity for researchers and archaeologists with an enhanced understanding of the historic life along the Santa Fe River. Great quantities of rock art are found along the Santa Fe River Canyon walls which would be protected under Federal ownership.

4.1.1.3 Wildlife

The proposed acquisition would preserve and protect wildlife habitat from future development. The acquisition would create a 3-mile stretch of public land within the Santa Fe River. This consolidation would provide a safe haven for a variety of wildlife to freely inhabit and expand without abrasive intrusion from future development. The proposed acquisition would protect and preserve a segment of the dispersed vertically and horizontally patchwork pattern within the Santa Fe River landscape. The canyon walls within the object property provides large amount of “edge” where one habitat type blends into another. The riparian habitat along the Santa Fe River would be protected and would continue to provide food, cover, and water to a diverse assemblage of wildlife species. The canyon walls within the property contain numerous unique, special-feature habitats exist within the area. These specific features, such as, caves or cracks in cliffs or cavities in trees; that is, they cannot survive except where the feature exists.

4.1.1.3.1 Migratory Birds

The proposed acquisition would consolidate a 3-mile stretch of Santa Fe River which is part of a major migratory corridor for avian species and provides important stopover, breeding, or permanent habitat for a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and migratory songbirds. The proposal would provide these migratory birds an area with very minimum human activities and constant intrusion. The acquisition provides opportunity to inventory, monitor, restore and enhance migratory bird habitat, prevents and manages invasive species for the benefit of migratory birds, and supporting management studies and research to identify the habitat conditions needed to conserve migratory birds and to evaluate the effects of management activities on habitats and populations of migratory birds.

4.1.1.4 Water Use

The proposed acquisition includes 12.9 acre-feet of irrigation water rights that are listed as a diversion usage. If the property is acquired, BLM would continue to be irrigated the property as it has in the past.

4.1.1.5 Riparian Vegetation

The property acquisition would allow BLM to maintain and improve the riparian portion of the property which has been subjected to grazing, encroaching of non-native vegetation, and unhealthy modified composition of vegetation from one that is dominated by non-native species. This would prove beneficial to the watershed and help maintain water quality in the River.

4.1.1.6 Recreation

The proposed action would provide non-motorized recreational activities and include public access to a 3-mile stretch of the Santa Fe River. The access provides hiking opportunities with scenic views and excellent bird watching locations. The consolidation of landownership would minimize trespass from members of the public across private into public lands.

4.1.2 Alternative B: No Action

4.1.2.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Under the no action alternative, the existing resource would not be incorporated and managed under the La Cienega ACEC. The property would remain under private ownership. The property would continue to be used for livestock grazing and irrigation land. In the future, the property owner may sell to another individual who may further develop the property.

4.1.2.2 Cultural Resources

The cultural resources contained within the property would be subject to future development and possible surface disturbance activities. Under the no action alternative, the resources would result in the lack of protection and preservation which would not be provided by Federal ownership.

4.1.2.3 Wildlife

Under the no action alternative, the wildlife habitat would continue to endure livestock grazing activities and be subject to future land development. These developments may include surface disturbance and increase encroachment on wildlife habitat.

4.1.2.3.1 Migratory Birds

The migratory bird habitat would remain in private ownership and would be subject to continual land activities, such as livestock grazing, irrigation, and future land development.

4.1.2.4 Water Use

Under the no action alternative, the landowner would continue to irrigate the property.

4.1.2.5 Riparian Vegetation

Under the no action alternative, the riparian vegetation along the Santa Fe River would continue to undergo livestock grazing.

4.1.1.6 Recreation

No public access to the Santa Fe River would be gained.

4.2 Cumulative Effects Analysis

A cumulative impact, as defined in 40 CFR 1508.7, is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other action.

4.2.1 Cumulative Actions

4.2.1.1 Past and Present Actions

The original landowner built an adobe farm house with six rooms with an attached storage building. The house is powered by solar panels and has no indoor plumbing. The owner currently grazes livestock on the property and has two separate corrals. The property contains a small apple orchard on the west side of the Santa Fe River below the canyon wall. This orchard is in poor condition and needs improvement to continue to produce fruit. An irrigation ditch enters the property from the northeast corner flow into an irrigation pond on the southeast corner of the field. The water is distributed in the field from this point.

The property also contains a 20-foot road and utility easement which is used by the adjacent landowners. They have utilities that cross through the easement and into their property.

4.2.1.2 Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

In the foreseeable future, the BLM would develop a site-specific management plan to include local community and public input. The plan would contain multiple objectives, primarily geared towards protecting and enhancing the cultural, riparian, natural resources, and interpretive values. The goals and objectives in the La Cienega ACEC Coordinate Resource Management Plan will be incorporated into the site-specific plan.

4.2.2 Cumulative Effects

4.2.2.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The proposed acquisition would increase and consolidate land within the ACEC. The adobe farm house could provide an opportunity for a potential interpretive center for public education and interpretation of cultural and natural resources to emphasize the importance of protecting them. BLM would work with local community organizations to develop and maintain the interpretive site.

4.2.2.2 Cultural Resources

The acquired property would be inventoried for archaeological sites to set a baseline for the type and condition of sites within the parcels. The rock art, within the project area, would be formally inventoried to include locating, photographing, sketching, and written documentation. This would help the BLM manage the sites and monitor their condition.

4.2.2.3 Wildlife

On the acquired land, where appropriate, reestablish and/or augment native species in historical habitat and control competition from exotic species by reducing or eliminating them through a variety of treatments. The site-specific management plan would include goals and objectives to enhance wildlife habitat and treat non-native vegetation.

4.2.2.4 Water Use

The acquired land would provide opportunities to collaborate in monitoring aquatic habitat, including water quality and quantity, with local, state, and Federal agencies. The BLM's collaboration with the appropriate agencies to maintain the water quality in area streams at current designed use stream standards (for irrigation, livestock, and wildlife watering, marginal cold-water fishery, secondary contact recreation and warm water fishery).

4.2.2.5 Riparian Vegetation

The proposed acquisition contains a riparian area along the Santa Fe River. These areas would be managed to restore and enhance natural riparian vegetation and eliminate the non-native vegetation. To enhance these areas, the BLM would work cooperatively with other agencies responsible for the area's water quality and use, and with the grazing permittee.

4.2.2.6 Recreation

Recreational opportunities would be enhanced by consolidating public land ownership. The continuity of hiking trails through the area would provide for improved recreational experiences, especially where access is available from more than one trailhead.

Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination

5.1 Summary of Public Participation

The Bureau of Management Taos Field Office consultant with local community groups such as La Cienega Valley Association and El Rancho de Las Golondrinas regarding the proposed acquisition. Both groups express positive responses to BLM's acquisition of the Rael property. They strongly support the protection and preservation of the cultural and historic resources of the Rael property. In addition, the EA will be released to the public for a 10-day review.

Chapter 6: Consultation and Coordination

6.1 List of Preparers

Pamela Herrera-Olivas – Wildlife Management Biologist
Paul Williams – Archaeologist
Sarah Naranjo – Realty Specialist
Tami Torres – Outdoor Recreational Planner
Greg Gustina – Fish Biologist
Herb Chavez – Engineer
Brad Higdon – NEPA Coordinator
Ernesto Hurtado – Assistant Field Manger
John Bailey – Assistant Field Manager

Chapter 7: References

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